

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is requested in view of the above amendment and the following remarks. Claim 1 has been amended. Support for this amendment can be found at least in Figure 1A. Claims 1-2, and 4-5 remain pending.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Yoshii et al.

The Examiner maintained the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by Yoshii et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,637,416). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 1 requires a larger porosity in the intermediate part of the positive electrode plate than the surface parts of the electrode plate. Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the intermediate part must have a larger porosity than the surface parts on *both sides* of the intermediate part. As stated in the prior response, the porosity referred to in claim 1 is that of the electrode plate after the active material has been filled in the support. Applicants have discovered that swelling of the electrode plate can be reduced by modifying the porosity of the intermediate part as required by claim 1.

Yoshii is directed to an electrode plate for an alkaline storage battery with a substrate having a higher porosity layer and a lower porosity layer. (Col. 1, ll. 55-63). Yoshii teaches that the lower porosity layer of the substrate contains a higher percentage of metal than the higher porosity layer, and thus exhibits better conductivity. (Col. 3, lines 5-10). The increased conductivity of the electrode improves the utilization rate and the discharge capacity of the battery. (Col. 3, lines 5-10). Yoshii teaches that the active material should be applied to only the higher porosity layer of the substrate, and not allowed to penetrate the lower porosity layer of the substrate. (Col. 4, lines 8-24).

As discussed in the pending Office Action, the lower porosity layer presumably has the highest porosity once the substrate is filled with active material. The lower porosity layer (which actually has the higher porosity of the two layers) is on the outer surface of the substrate,

however. Claim 1 specifically requires that the surface parts located on both sides of the intermediate layer possess a lower porosity than the intermediate part. Thus, Yoshii fails to teach an electrode plate having a higher porosity in the intermediate part than the surface parts located on both sides of the intermediate part.

Yoshii teaches varying the porosity of the substrate, not the substrate carrying active material. In addition, Yoshii suggests modifying the porosity to enhance the conductivity of the electrode. Thus, there would have been no motivation to modify the electrode as required by claim 1. For at least these reasons, Yoshii fails to anticipate claim 1.

Claims 2, 4, and 5 depend from claim 1, an allowable base claim. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully contend Yoshii fails to anticipate these claims as well.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application in the form of a Notice of Allowance.

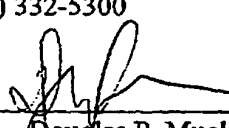


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Respectfully submitted,

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